



6359.0 - Forms of Employment, Australia, November 2010 Quality

Declaration

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One in ten workers are independent contractors

There were 1.1 million people who were independent contractors in their main job in November 2010, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This represented 9.8% of all employed persons and was an increase from 1.0 million (9.6% of employed persons) in November 2009.

In November 2010, one in ten (10%) independent contractors worked seven days a week, compared with 4% of employees. Independent contractors were more likely than employees to work both weekdays and weekends (39% of independent contractors compared with 30% of employees).

Independent contractors worked longer hours than employees: almost a quarter (24%) worked 49 or more hours a week (compared with 12% of employees). They were also more likely to be on call or stand-by than employees (36% compared with 23%). Independent contractors were twice as likely as employees to have their hours vary each week (46% compared with 23%).

Independent contractors tended to be older than employees, with more than half (53%) of independent contractors aged over 45, compared with just over one-third (35%) of employees. Independent contractors also tended to be with their current employer/business longer than employees: almost two-fifths (38%) of independent contractors had been with their current employer for 10 or more years, compared with one-fifth (20%) of employees.

Other findings from the survey included:

- Almost three-quarters of independent contractors were men (74%, or 824,000).
- Almost one-third (33%) of employed persons in the construction industry were independent contractors.
- Male independent contractors were more likely to work as technicians and trades workers (38%), while female independent contractors were more likely to work as professionals (32%).
- Around half of all independent contractors (49% of men and 54% of women) were in the 35-54 year age groups.

More details are available in *Forms of Employment, Australia, November 2010* (cat. no. 6359.0).

Media notes:

- Independent contractors are defined as employed people who operate their own business and who contract to perform services for others under a commercial contract, rather than as an employee under an employment contract. Independent contractors provide a labour

service directly to a client, rather than generating their income from managing their staff or from selling goods or services.

- When reporting ABS data the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or ABS) must be attributed as the source.

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